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ABSTRACT

Candidate selection considerations necessary in the development of model teacher education programs are presented in this paper. The physical, mental, and personal areas which must be assessed and evaluated are discussed as a framework for stating specific selection criteria for the particular institution developing the program. Some suggested procedures for gathering information on a prospective candidate are outlined, as well as procedures for the smooth orientation and induction of those candidates selected to begin a model teacher education program. These guidelines, suggestions, and procedures are aimed at increasing the efficiency, effectiveness, and positive human relations in a model candidate selection component. (Author/JS)

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CANDIDATE SELECTION CRITERIA FOR A MODEL TEACHER EDUCATION PROGRAM

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Introduction

In the design and development of a model teacher education program which incorporates the systems approach, the nature and quality of the incoming students is a primary concern. The nature and quality of the incoming student will determine the instructional resources and effort necessary for that student to attain the specified competencies. The rate of progression through the program, and the nature and quality of the teacher entering the classroom will be influenced by the recruitment, assessment and selection of those entering the model teacher education program.

Candidate selection considers the available pool of possible candidates and the projected personnel needs, as well as the performance requirements of the program, in accepting or redirecting candidates for the program. Specific selection criteria, such as minimum test scores or predetermined profile patterns, are not set forth in this bulletin. These specific criteria must be established by the particular institution in view of all of the unique factors of its program. Specific criteria must also undergo extensive and continuous evaluation of their power in predicting success in the program, efficiency of learning effort, and performance as a teacher.

This bulletin delineates some of the physical, mental, and personal areas from which specific criteria must be derived for any particular model teacher education program. It also includes the description of assessment, evaluation, orientation, and induction procedures which would result in a systematic and efficient candidate selection component. The long-range goal of such a component is to provide a positive and growth-producing effect upon the elementary school population served by teachers from the model program.

Selection Areas

The procedures and instruments selected or devised for use in the candidate selection component are vital to the success of that component. They must be valid and reliable, be readily subject to continuous evaluation and revision, minimize discriminatory bases for selection, and provide adequately for the smooth progression of students in and out of the program. The areas for selection are the physical, mental and personal characteristics of the incoming candidates.

Physical Characteristics. A comprehensive physical examination should be administered by the student's personal physician or a university physician. The examination is designed to reveal any abnormalities which

might preclude a candidate's successful performance in teaching. Chronic illnesses which might involve low stamina on the job, obvious gross physical abnormalities or disfiguration, and other predisposing factors revealed through examination are cause for the candidate selection committee to consider carefully before admitting a student.

The physical examination should also insure that the student meets minimum standards for admission to a university program, and that he is in good general health to pursue his education in an uninterrupted fashion. It should also insure absence of illness or disease which might threaten other members of the university community or the community at large.

Many currently available physical examinations used for college entrance are considered inadequate from the standpoint of thoroughness. There is also some question as to the amount of examination data gathered from questioning in relation to the amount gathered from direct examination. The actual physical examination of the candidate for admission to a model program should be designed to be as thorough and direct as is economically possible. Medical consultants should be used to design the examination from the standpoints of comprehensiveness and cost effectiveness. Initial emphasis on the

physical-medical aspects of candidate selection avoids unnecessary later attrition due to predisposing debilitative factors.

Mental and Personal Characteristics. Additional information concerning the candidate is obtained through testing and personal interviews. The candidate will visit the campus to obtain an interview with the candidate review committee and take a series of four tests: The Minnesota Teacher Attitude Inventory, Edwards Personal Preference Schedule, Strong Vocational Interest Inventory (teaching area) and the School and College Ability Test (SCAT) if the candidate has not previously been administered this test.

Minimum acceptable scores for the above instruments will be arrived at through consultation with representatives of all participating institutions as well as by inspection of the normative data included in each of the test manuals. Current empirical use of such instruments at the institution will be an additional index in determining the standards for review and admission. Special attention will be given to the reduction of cultural bias in all assessment procedures and instruments through simulated and empirical research.

Further assessment of candidates is done by a committee designated to function as the candidate review committee. This committee will consist of an Assistant Director of Student Selections, a representative of the Director of Teacher Education - Elementary, and a career development specialist affiliated with the university or college administration. Rationale for the composition of this committee is essentially constructive. In the event that the prospective candidate ultimately decides not to enter teacher education, or fails to meet specifications of the model program, this committee will be instrumental in assisting the student to redirect his abilities and interests to another academic or vocational pursuit. Economy of time is crucial to the student at all phases of university work, and it is felt that the constructive aspects of the candidate review committee facilitate change for the student moving along in his career development. Activities of this committee complement the entire student personnel orientation of the university system at large.

The prime function of the committee is to examine carefully each of the prospective candidates for such personal characteristics which the program feels will (a) assist in positive pupil gain in elementary schools,

(b) facilitate innovative techniques in teaching while continuing assessment of current traditional pedagogical models, (c) predict successful candidate performance in the model program, and (d) predict stable emotional-social health of the candidate while he is a student. Such a configuration of goals will allow the committee to examine each of the candidates for a great deal of nonacademic information, such as affective qualities of adjustment, and such qualities as openness, flexibility, friendliness, communicative (verbal and nonverbal) skills, and general perceived impression. Along with the written test scores, the interview serves to acquaint the prospective candidate with the program, to allow him to direct questions to the committee and to receive answers directly from them. The interview also allows the committee to ask the candidate to expand his autobiographical written statements for the benefit of further general information.

Evaluation and Decision

Following the scoring and scaling of the test data and after the candidate's personal interview, the committee will meet and each member will rate each candidate independently on the checklist of qualities on instruments such as the Likert scale. The Likert scale is shown in

Figure 1. (To avoid bias, scores from written test instruments will not have been examined by the judges until after the personal interview has been accomplished.) After the personal interview and after independent ratings, profile sheets on the judges' rating will be generated. Discussion of intra-item point spreads is warranted where wide differences exist among judges on ratings of interview criteria. Consonance of judges' opinions of each prospective candidate will be one of the substantive features of candidate selection. Success on test instruments with concomitant success in the personal interview will be one of the chief predictors of ultimate final selection and approval for admission to the model program. Caution is inserted here, however, with reference to the prospective candidate with minor deficiencies. When remediation of deficiencies is viewed as possible and worthwhile, written statements of conditional admission will be made on the permanent record, and the candidate will be made aware of such deficiencies for future constructive change. Periodic reevaluation of candidates on test instruments will constitute a longitudinal measure of the success of the program and the effect on the candidates.

Candidate Personal Interview Criteria

	Low 1	2	3	4	High 5
Verbal Communication					
Sociability					
Warmth					
Physical Appearance					
Grooming					
Friendliness					
Expression of Motivation for Entering Teacher Education					
Poise					
Confidence in Self					
Dominance-Submissiveness					

Fig. 1. Likert Scale.

Early Decision and Notification

In the case of positive unanimous or near-unanimous decision in favor of accepting a prospective candidate, notification of the decision of the candidate review committee will be issued immediately after the psychometric tests have been scored and evaluated and the personal interview completed. This feature of the program will serve to eliminate unnecessary correspondence between applicants and the committee, as well as serve as a stronger recruitment tool in cases where the prospective candidate has applied to several institutions. Highly qualified students, actively recruited and positively notified, will likely select the model program in which to study if immediate signs of approval of their qualifications are demonstrated by the committee.

Early establishment of rapport, warmth, and positive regard between candidates and their instructors and supervisors in the model program is a desired high priority goal, whose long-range effects hopefully will carry into enthusiasm for personal and curricular development. Early decision is one aspect of candidate selection which serves to set it apart from traditional models of application. Additionally, the orientation and induction program designed with the student as the central focus lends

a feeling of self-confidence to the candidate and is a helpful tool in building a healthy self-perception for candidates entering the teaching profession. Positive feedback is then essential in all aspects of recruitment.

Applicants thought to be particularly unsuited to the model program are additionally assisted by the candidate review committee when this body assists these individuals in exploring other career development possibilities.

Orientation and Induction

Beginning post-high school candidates entering the model program will enjoy the opportunity to participate in orientation which includes aspects reflective of new-student activities in a small college.

When the candidate receives his notice of acceptance it will tell him the campus on which he is to begin work, the month in which he will be admitted, and detailed arrangements for his housing, registration and enrollment. (On each application the students are required to list their first, second and third choices for campus, month in which to begin work and housing facilities desired.)

When the student arrives on campus he will have already made arrangements for housing and have been informed

with regard to the first orientation meeting. It is likely that he will arrive on a weekend and be ready to attend his first orientation session on the Monday following his arrival. However, before he enters the orientation session he will meet with his "student host" or "big brother," who is an upper-class student assigned to making certain that the entering freshman becomes readily acclimated to his new social environment. The student host will also answer immediate questions and familiarize the neophyte with features of the campus and its traditions.

The student host will guide the entering student to the first orientation meeting and introduce him to the director of orientation. There will be about twenty students and three or four staff members at the first orientation session. In addition to the director of orientation will be staff advisors to whom the entering students will be assigned for several months to come.

The orientation program continues as long as is necessary to provide the entering student with the essential details of the important venture which he has begun. Included in this program are such concerns as the overall nature of the program; the specific nature of the learning guides called proficiency modules or PMs; the effort unit

system of grading and scholarships; and developing skills in the use of computers, teaching machines, projectors, and tape recorders which the student will be required to use in pursuing his studies. Informal spontaneous events such as morning and afternoon coffee or "coke" breaks, as well as planned picnics and evening meetings attended by professors and sometimes their wives, will provide the social setting for the new students.

Through the orientation program the students will have learned many facts and traditions of the campus which they are attending, they will understand the program in its total six year sequence, they will have become familiar with learning procedures and study routines and will have met the professors and their assistants who are charged with the responsibility of guiding them through the learning activities in which they are to participate. Also, they will have visited each of the learning centers and reference laboratories which they will be using during the period in which they pursue their studies. As the director of orientation becomes satisfied that particular students are ready to move from orientation to seminar assignments, these students are transferred to the program seminar units.

The seminar is a heterogeneous group of approximately twenty education students. Some have been in the seminar

for almost two years and are near completion of their para-professional work while others are just beginning. Before entering the seminar the student will have been prepared by having been introduced informally to the seminar participants in a social setting and by having conferred with his seminar leader who is also his faculty advisor. During this conference the advisor explains to the student that initially he is not expected to participate actively in the seminar and that, as time passes, he will find himself comfortably joining in and making his contributions to the productiveness of these sessions. Thus, when he enters the seminar the student is somewhat prepared for it and begins the process of identifying himself with a group of individuals with common concern for professional education.

Summary

Candidate selection considerations necessary in the development of model teacher education programs were presented in this document. The physical, mental, and personal areas which must be assessed and evaluated were discussed as a framework for stating specific selection criteria for the particular institution developing the program. Some suggested procedures for gathering information on a prospective candidate were outlined, as well as procedures for the smooth orientation and induction of those candidates selected to begin a model teacher education program. These guidelines, suggestions, and procedures are aimed at increasing the efficiency, effectiveness, and positive human relations in a model candidate selection component.